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*Lex Luthor's*

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SAPRISTI, BOHEMIA. "THE MOST FOUL FIT OF ALL EUROPE." 1358. THE IMMORTAL VANDAL SAVAGE.

# THE BLACK RING

**PART SIX**

**paul cornell**  
writer  
**pete woods**  
artist  
**brad anderson**  
colorist  
**rob leigh**  
letterer  
**david finch,**  
**batt**  
& **peter**  
**stelgerwald**  
cover  
**will moss**  
asst. editor  
**matt idelson**  
editor

**superman**  
created by  
**jerry siegel**  
& **joe shuster**

STILL  
NO SIGN  
OF HIM?

NO,  
MY LORD...

BORN IN SMALLVILLE  
BUT BELIEVING HIMSELF  
SUPERIOR, HE MURDERED HIS  
FATHER TO ESCAPE SMALL-TOWN AMERICA  
AND BUILT AN EMPIRE ON HIS GENIUS.  
THE SWORN ENEMY OF SUPERMAN, HE HAS  
VOWED THAT THE WORLD WILL TURN ITS  
BACK ON THE MAN OF STEEL AND INSTEAD  
EMBRACE HUMANITY'S CHAMPION...  
AND FUTURE RULER.

**Lex Luthor**





--AND MAY I SUGGEST THAT THE NIGHT OF A FESTIVAL--

UARRGGH!

--MAY NOT BE THE BEST TIME TO MAKE OUR INQUIRIES?



OH, IT'S OF NO MATTER.

THE HIGH EMOTION SETS THEM OFF, AND THE HIGH TIDE.

IT SENDS THE HUMORS OF THE PUSTULES INTO THE CITY.

EXCUSE ME, A MOMENT.



GEEAGH!

THIS MAN ATTACKED HIS LIEGE.



GIVES ME AN EXCUSE, ANYWAY.

A SMALL PLEASURE, BUT NICELY TAKEN.

NOW--



"--THE TIDE SHOULD HAVE EBBED."

"I SHALL MAKE MY YEARLY INSPECTION OF THE PUSTULES."

I RECALL THE PATH EXACTLY... EVEN THROUGH THE THOUSAND TRAPS I HAVE SET.

FOR DID I NOT BUILD THIS CITY ATOP THESE BEAUTIES?

GUARD CAPTAINS, I KNOW THIS IS MERE RITUAL--

--BUT ALLOW ME TO AFFIRM AGAIN. IT IS PROPHESED THAT THIS MAN WILL COME, FOR HOW ELSE COULD HE "MAKE HIS PRESENCE FELT"?

THAT HE WILL NOT WISH ME WELL, BUT THAT HIS ADVENTURE WILL GRANT ME GREAT HAPPINESS.

IT IS HE THIS CITY IS SET TO TRAP AND KEEP, TO MAKE SURE OF THAT CONSEQUENCE. FOR DEATH WAS ALSO MENTIONED. HAVE YOU SEEN HIM?

NO, MY LORD.

AYE, FOR INDEED...

...WE MAY NOT YET BE BORN.

BUT I CAN WAIT. HAPPINESS FOR ME IS CONQUEST--

--I MAY HAVE CENTURIES OF IT BEFORE HE ADDS HIS CONTRIBUTION!



17TH CENTURY...



Hmph.

18TH CENTURY...



YOU'RE RIGHT, MY GOOD NATURAL PHILOSOPHER, THE WORD OF A SOOTHSAYER IS WORTH LITTLE, HOWEVER--

19TH CENTURY...



--YOU KNOW, IT'S GETTING REALLY HARD TO HOLD ONTO THIS PLACE--

20TH CENTURY...



--"BOHEMIA" SOUNDED SO MUCH BETTER THAN "CZECHOSLOVAKIA"...







A FEW YEARS AGO.

DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE THIS MAN FROST HAS KILLED THE FLASH?

HARDLY. IT'S SOME ILLUSION.

LUTHOR, WE'VE MET ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS...

...MIGHT I OFFER YOU HOSPITALITY?

I HAVE A FINE RESIDENCE IN THE CZECH CITY OF--

SAVAGE--

--WE'RE NOT FRIENDS.

I DON'T ASSOCIATE WITH "SUPER-VILLAINS" UNLESS IT'S TO LEAD THEM.

THEY HAVE MASTER PLANS AND COSTUMES AND PRETENSIONS.

WE HAVE LITTLE IN COMMON.

EXCUSE ME.

THIS HAPPENED BETWEEN PANELS IN FLASH #124.  
--Meticulous Matt.



A FEW MONTHS AGO.

IT'S AGREED, THEN. WE HAVE COMMON AIMS. TO GET BACK TO EARTH, WE'LL WORK TOGETHER, AS EQUALS AND FRIENDS.

Heh.

MY NATURE GIVES ME A UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE ON ONE SUCH AS YOU, LUTHOR.

CHANGING LIKE THE WIND. HERE AND GONE IN A MOMENT.

WHAT'S YOUR POINT?

YOU MIGHT SHORTLY MAKE A DECISION THAT WILL DESTINE YOU FOR LASTING GREATNESS.

ONCE WE RETURN TO EARTH, IF YOU WOULD WILLINGLY COME TO ONE OF MY FACILITIES, IN THE CHARMING CZECH CITY OF--

Hmm...

...TO DO LIST, POINT ONE--

DAMN HIM--!

--HE IS TURNING MY PROPHECY INTO A MERE--

AND THIS DURING THE CLIMAX OF SALVATION RUN.  
--Meretricious Matt.



"--DREAM!"

NOW, LEXCORP  
FACILITY, WOOMERA,  
AUSTRALIA.

...TEN...  
EXTRUCTIONS...

ONLY  
TEN!

ALL TEN!

CHANGE  
THOSE TEN,  
AND--

--AND--!





--POWER!

LEX,  
WHAT--?!



MANY GREAT  
SCIENTISTS HAVE  
SOLVED PROBLEMS  
IN DREAMS.

NOW I HAVE,  
TOO. I'M SURE  
OF IT.

THE BLACK  
SPHERES--



--ALL THAT OUR ANALYSIS  
OF THEM HAS REVEALED IS THAT  
IN THEIR INITIAL CONDITION  
THEY'RE REMNANTS OF BLACK  
LANTERN ENERGY--

--STORAGE POINTS FOR  
THAT ENERGY, PERHAPS WITH  
SOME SORT OF CONNECTION  
TO ANOTHER DIMENSION.

WHEN WE ANALYZE THEM,  
WE CHANGE THEIR NATURE.  
I HAD THOUGHT THAT A  
SOURCE OF POTENTIAL POWER.  
BUT IN MY DREAM--



--THE POWER COMES NOT  
FROM INVESTIGATING  
THE SPHERES, BUT FROM  
CHANGING THEM.

ALL TEN.  
OF WHICH WE HAVE  
SO FAR CHANGED  
TWO.

LEX,  
THAT'S  
GREAT!









A TEST MISSION? I SUPPOSE WE COULD...

WE'RE STILL INTEGRATING THE THANAGARIAN TECH WITH THE APOKOUPITIAN. WE WON'T BE READY FOR INTERSTELLAR FLIGHT FOR AT LEAST--

THAT'S NOT YET REQUIRED.

THIS WILL BE JUST LIKE A VISIT TO OUR SPACE STATION, WHEN WE WERE SETTING UP THAT PART OF THE PLAN. TODAY I WANT TO LAUNCH--



--A SATELLITE.

WITH A REMOTE BLACK LANTERN ENERGY SENSOR ABOARD?

YOU'RE PLANNING TO CHANGE THE CONDITION OF SOME OF THE SPHERES--?



--FROM ORBIT.

SO WE CAN PROCEED TO DEALING WITH OUR MORE DIFFICULT TARGETS. THESE TWO ARE NEATLY TOGETHER.

AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, I SHOULDN'T THINK--







MY PUSTULES NO  
LONGER MAKE ME  
FEEL ANGRY!

THE PEOPLE  
OF THE CITY--

--ARE FIGHTING  
AS PEOPLE DO,  
BECAUSE THEY  
ALWAYS HAVE!

YOU  
TWO--!

--THIS WAS YOUR  
RESPONSIBILITY!

YOU HAVE  
BROKEN YOUR  
OATH!

B...BUT  
EVERYTHING  
INDICATES HE  
HASN'T COME  
HERE, SIR--

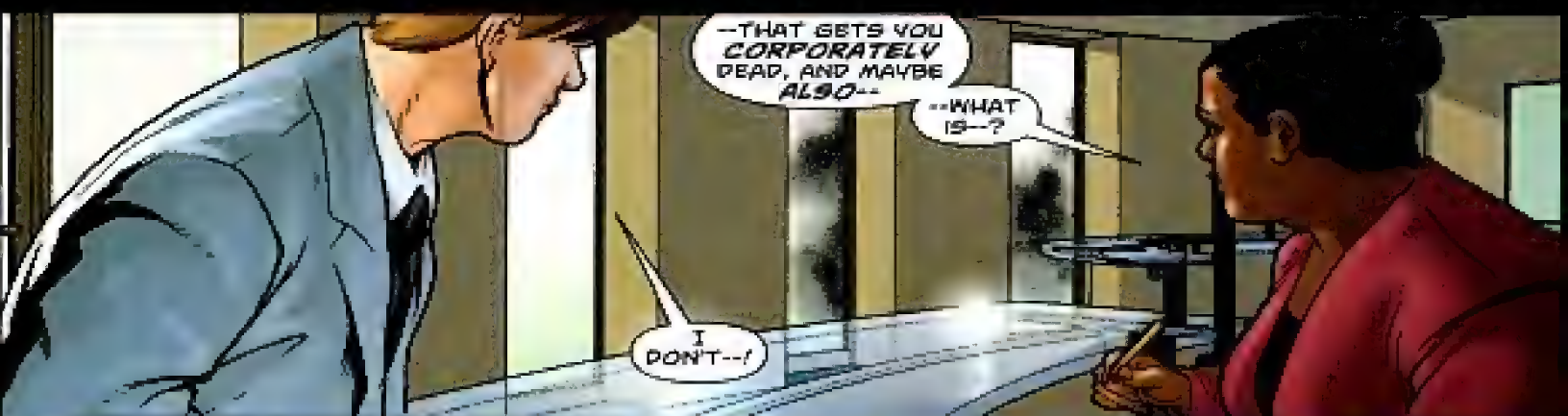
DETAILS!  
WHAT DOES  
YOUR CRIME  
REQUIRE?!













AN HOUR LATER.

LEXCORP  
CONTROL TO  
L.C.I., CLEAR FOR  
LANDING.

KATV  
SOUNDED KIND  
OF STRESSED  
OUT.

I DID  
WHAT YOU  
SAID, I CLEARED  
THEM FOR  
LANDING.

I WAS GOING  
TO HAVE LUNCH  
WITH A MATE  
OF MINE--

--BUT HE SAYS  
HE WAS JUST TOLD  
"ALL APPOINTMENTS  
OFF."

I'M SORRY,  
GENTLEMEN, WE'LL  
RESCHEDULE.

SOMETHING'S UP  
WITH THE CENTRAL  
DATA FEED...

YEAH,  
WHILE THE  
CAT'S  
AWAY...











--HAPPINESS IS CONQUEST. CONQUEST IS POWER. POWER IS KNOWLEDGE.

I *MUST* BE HERE TO TAKE *THIS* KNOWLEDGE FROM YOU.

TELL ME HOW TO FIND THE REST OF THESE--

--AND WE'LL LEAVE.

THINK VERY HARD ABOUT YOUR ANSWER, I HOLD IN MY HANDS EVERYTHING YOU HAVE BUILT.

I CAN SEE I'M AT A DISADVANTAGE.

YOU'VE SHUT DOWN MY SECURITY, BESIEGED MY BUILDING--

--AND PREVENTED ME FROM SUMMONING--



...ANY KIND  
OF HELP."

HEY,  
SCANDAL--

--ANY IDEA  
WHAT THAT  
MEANS?

**NEXT: DIE HARD vs. DAD**





GOOD MORNING,  
AWESOME  
NEW ALIEN  
FRIENDS!



RISE AND  
SHINE! WE'VE GOT  
A BIG DAY AHEAD  
OF US!

WOOH...  
IS HE JOKING?  
WHAT TIME  
IS IT?

GOOOOH  
WOW...I HAD  
WAY TOO MUCH  
OXYGEN LAST  
NIGHT...



SERIOUSLY,  
EARTHBOY, WE  
COME IN PEACE--  
UNLESS YOU TRY  
TO WAKE US UP  
BEFORE NOON.

THEN  
THIS GETS  
UGLY REAL  
QUICK.

NONSENSE!  
MORNING IN  
METROPOLIS IS NOT  
SOMETHING YOU  
WANNA MISS!



ECK,  
I TRIED TO  
WARN YA.

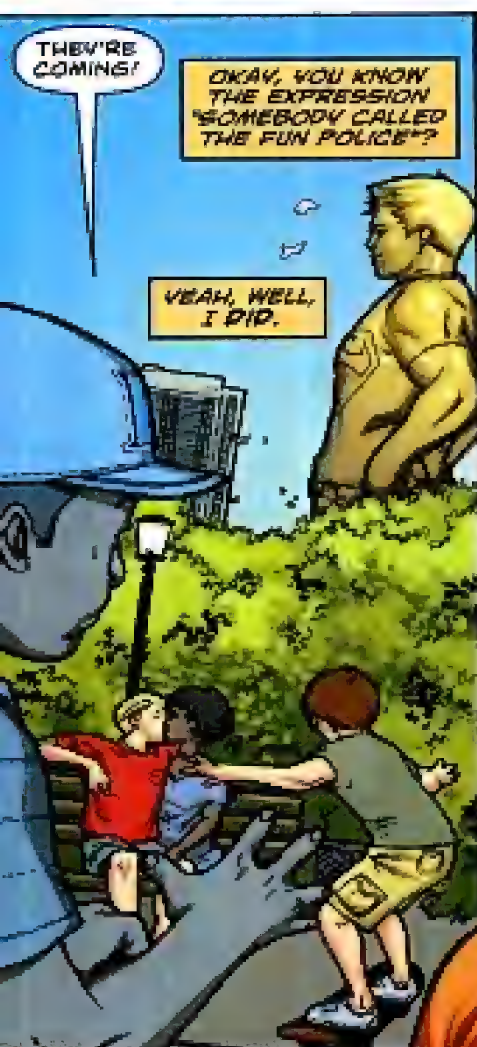
DWAHV...  
KILL INSOLENT  
HUMAN--

KILL HIM  
YOURSELF. I'M TOO  
HUNG OVER.









WHO NEEDS A NIGHT CLUB WHEN YOU'VE GOT A BOOK CLUB? AMIRITE?



LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,  
THE METROPOLIS LITERARY SOCIETY  
IS PROUD TO PRESENT SELECTED  
READINGS FROM "THE RAINS OF  
SAN LUIS OBISPO"...

—AN AS-YET  
UNPUBLISHED  
NOVEL WRITTEN  
BY THE DAILY  
PLANET'S OWN  
PERRY WHITE.

"SHE WAS COLD—  
NOT FROM THE DOWNCAST  
WEATHER, RARE ENOUGH IN  
THIS TOWN, BUT FROM THE  
TOO MANY HEARTBREAKS SHE  
HAD BEEN MADE TO ENDURE AT  
THE HANDS OF MEN WHOSE  
CARINGS CEASED WHEN THEIR  
DESIRES WERE MET.

"—HE PLACED A  
TREMBLING ARM 'ROUND  
HER SHOULDER AS THE RAINS  
BEAT DOWN ON THEM. THEY  
LOOKED UP AT THE CLOUDS  
AND CURSED, KNOWING THEIR  
MOMENT OF SEPARATION  
DREW NEARER.

"TIME AND  
FATE WOULD  
CONTINUE THEIR  
SLOW ABUSE."

WOW,  
FASCINATING  
STUFF, CHIEF.  
AND HOW LONG  
HAVE YOU BEEN  
WORKING ON  
THIS?

'BOUT EIGHTEEN  
YEARS NOW.  
EIGHTEEN YEARS  
AND OVER ONE  
THOUSAND  
PAGES.

Mm...  
FASCINATING.

I'D LIKE TO READ ANOTHER  
PASSAGE NOW, FROM A BIT  
LATER IN THE BOOK...

THIS IS...  
THIS IS BREATH-  
TAKINGLY  
HORRIBLE.

SO HELP ME...  
IF I EVER FIND THIS  
SAN LUIS OBISPO,  
I SWEAR TO DESTROY IT.









AND SOMETIMES, WE IN METROPOLIS YEARN FOR THE SIMPLER, QUIETER LIFE--

LIKE BEING IN A COMA?

--AND SO WE REACH OUT TO OUR LITTLE SISTER CITY, THE QUANT TOWN FAMOUSLY KNOWN AS **SMALLVILLE**! WE FIGURED YOU MIGHT WANT TO DO THE SAME WHEN YOU VISIT!



HERE TO TELL YOU ALL ABOUT IT, WE'VE ARRANGED A SPECIAL VIDEO CONFERENCE WITH SMALLVILLE'S OWN PROUDEST MOM, MARTHA KENT!

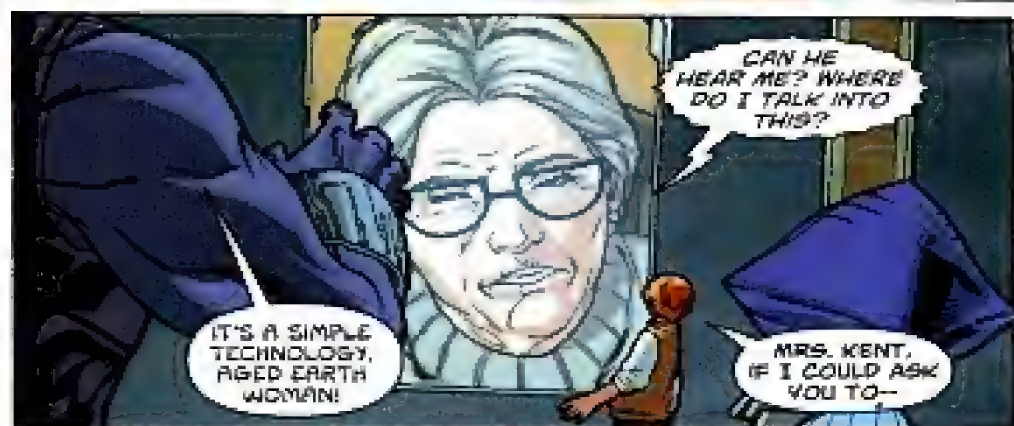
HELLO?!?  
HELLO?!?



HELLO, MRS. KENT, WE'RE HERE!

IS THAT JIMMY OLSEN? I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING HERE. HOW DO I MAKE THE PICTURE BIGGER?

I THINK YOU CAN JUST MAXIMIZE THE--



CAN HE HEAR ME? WHERE DO I TALK INTO THIS?

IT'S A SIMPLE TECHNOLOGY, AGED EARTH WOMAN!

MRS. KENT, IF I COULD ASK YOU TO--



IS THIS BETTER? CAN YOU HEAR ME BETTER?

Grrr  
OLD PEOPLE MOUTH!!!









OKAY. AT THIS POINT, I GOTTA ADMIT: I'M STUMPED.



I MEAN, I THOUGHT CHLOE DUMPED ME BECAUSE I'D GOTTEN BORING AND WHATNOT. NOW I'M ALL OUTSMARTING WASTED ALIENS AND PREVENTING PARTVOCALYPSE, AND STILL-- NOTHING!



BUT HEY, WHAT DO I CARE? I'M DOING FINE, HAN SOLO.

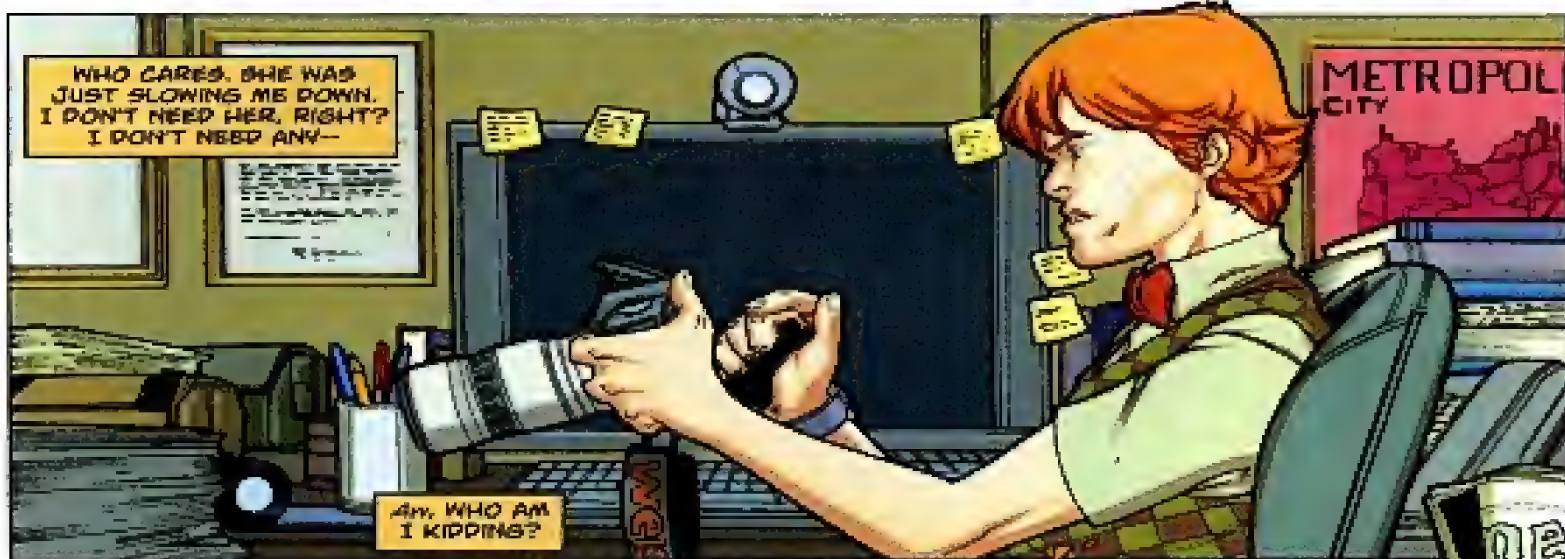
FREE AS BIRD.

LONE LIKE WOLF.

SO WHAT IF SHE WANTS TO HANG OUT WITH STUPID SEBASTIEN MALLORY?



WHAT'S HE GOT BESIDES, YOU KNOW, LIMITLESS MONEY AND GOOD LOOKS AND AN APARTMENT WHERE EVERY ROOM ISN'T THE LAUNDRY ROOM?



WHO CARES, SHE WAS JUST SLOWING ME DOWN. I DON'T NEED HER, RIGHT? I DON'T NEED ANY--

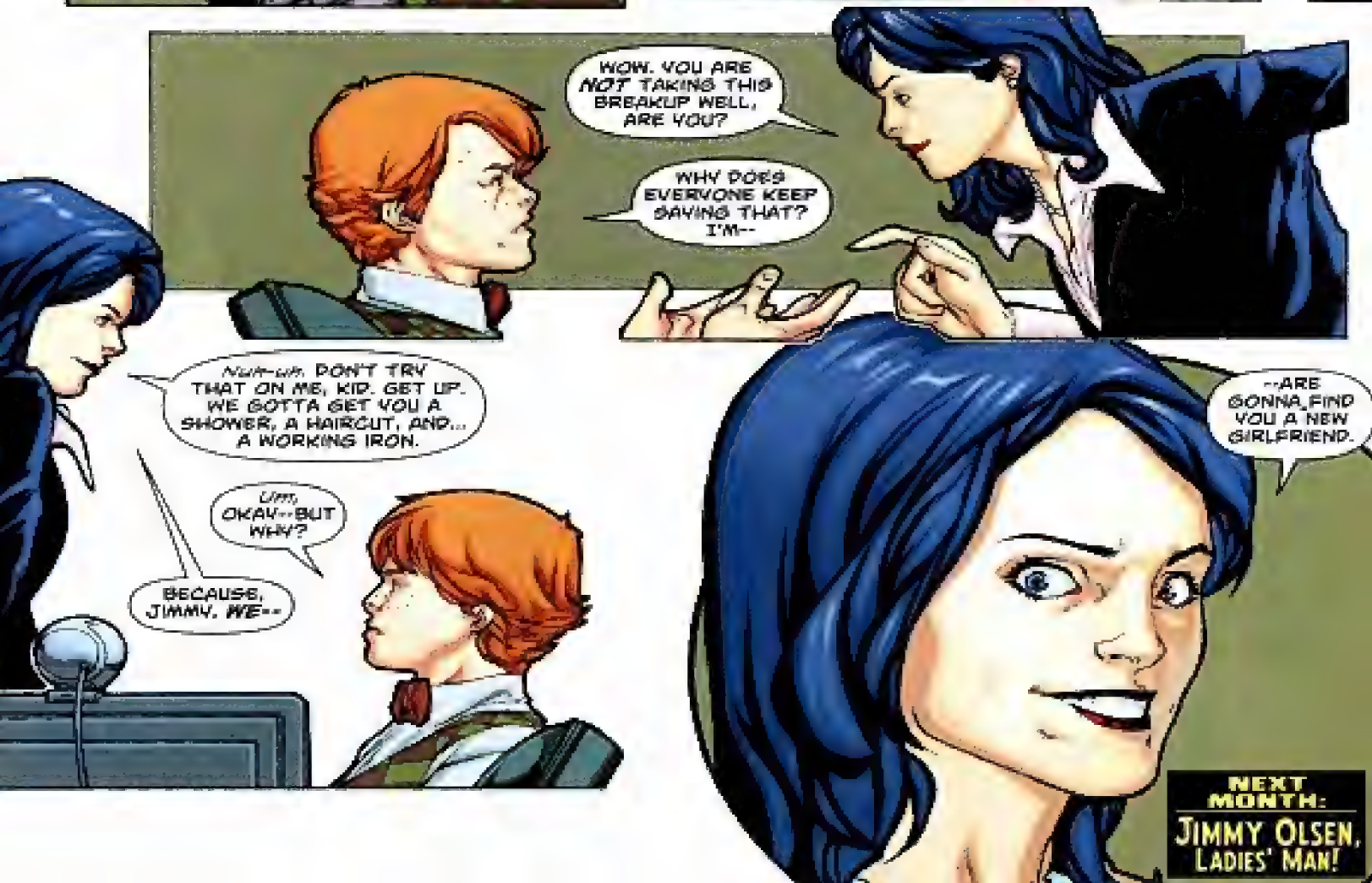
Am, WHO AM I KIDDING?



OW!

HEYA, OLSEN.







From Pilgrim Batman and all of us at DC Editorial:  
**HAPPY THANKSGIVING, DC NATION!**



Here are some of the things we'll be giving thanks for this year:

**Rex Ogle:** I'm thankful for my officemate **Sean Ryan** who always makes my workday a pleasant one. I suspect he may be made of kittens and unicorns and children's laughter.

**Will Mott:** Just like last year, I'm thankful for the astounding artwork of the newly DC-exclusive **CAMI**, currently blowing minds left and right in the pages of **T.H.U.N.D.E.R. AGENTS!** And I'm thankful that the legendary **Edvarda Kova** made time in his schedule to illustrate December's **JONAH HEX #62!**

**Liz Gehlert:** I'm grateful for the letters that kids send to Johnny DC. Reading them is one of my favorite parts of the job!

**Joey Cavallieri:** I'm thankful that I get to work on the Spirit, since **Will Eisner** was one of my teachers as well as a personal favorite — hell, one of everybody's personal favorites!

**Mike Morris:** I am thankful for writer/artists — **Dave Finch**, **Tony Daniel** — that means you!

**Rachel Gluckstern:** I've been told that the **TEEN TITANS** are grateful for

the new blood on their team — I think they should've been more careful what they wished for!

**Brian Cunningham:** I am thankful for all the visits I receive from other editors who mooch off my stash of free gum...waitaminute — they should be thankful for ME!

**Mike Carlin:** I am thankful for an amazing 25 years at DC Comics!

**Mark Chiarello:** I'm thankful that every episode of **Columbo** is on DVD.

**Eddie Berganza:** I am extremely thankful for all my hardworking freelancers — you know who you are! You make the comics awesome because you are awesome!

**Mark Idelson:** I'm thankful to be doing something I love for a living.

**Chris Conroy:** I am thankful for all the candy still left around the office from **Halloween**. DON'T JUDGE.

**Sean Ryan:** I'm thankful for my officemate **Rex Ogle** for making the workday feel a little like dipping my toe into a shallow pool of Heaven.

**Jon Sattler:** I'm grateful for all the members of the DC Nation who come out and support us at all the shows!

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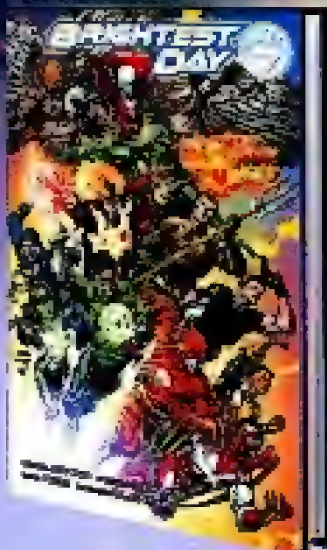


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SOOPAH-BEAST,  
HE'S SOOPA





SOOPAH-BEAST!  
AH-BEASTLY!